

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, PROP, MPOL, UR, US

SUBJ: SOVIET PERCEPTIONS OF U.S. NAVAL STRENGTH

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: A "PANEL" OF THREE LENINGRAD MILITARY AND NAVAL OFFICERS RECENTLY HELD A SESSION AT LENINGRAD'S CENTRAL PROPAGANDA HALL ON THE IMPERIALIST THREAT IN GENERAL AND THE CAPABILITIES OF THE U.S. NAVY IN PARTICULAR. ADDRESSEES MAY FIND PITCH OF INTEREST AS INDICATION OF SOVIET MILITARY PERCEPTIONS OF U.S. MILITARY/NAVAL CAPABILITIES. END SUMMARY.

2. THREE SOVIET OFFICERS, VICE ADMIRAL P.P. PLOTNIKOV, MAJOR GENERAL P.N. BIBIKOV, AND LIEUTENANT COLONEL P.L. SHCHERBAKOV, RECENTLY HELD ONE OF THE "MILITARY OVERVIEW" SESSIONS OCCASIONALLY OFFERED UP AS PART OF THE LENINGRAD PROPAGANDA CIRCUIT. AS USUAL, INFORMATION ON NUMBERS AND TYPES OF WEAPONRY WAS CONFINED SOLELY TO WESTERN CAPABILITIES RATHER THAN ANYTHING ON ACTUAL SOVIET CAPABILITIES, USING WESTERN PUBLIC SOURCES SUCH AS JANES. THE PRESENTATION DREW A GOOD CROWD FOR A SATURDAY.

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CONGEN POLOFF'S SEAT IN FIRST ROW WAS EITHER UNNOTICED

OR UNINHIBITING.

3. SUCH SESSIONS CUSTOMARILY BEGIN WITH WARMUP PITCH ON GENERAL INTERNATIONAL SCENE AND CONTINUING THREAT OF IMPERIALISM. LTC SHCHERBAKOV DID THE HONORS. HE SAID THAT IMPERIALIST REACTION WAS STRIVING TO SLOW AND EVEN DESTROY DETENTE. THE AGGRESSIVE NATURE OF IMPERIALISM HAS NOT CHANGED AND WILL NOT CHANGE, WITNESS SITUATIONS IN MIDDLE EAST AND ANGOLA. IMPERIALISM ALWAYS TRIES TO WEAKEN FORCES OF SOCIALISM AND, AS BREZHNEV SAID, "WE WELL KNOW THE CHARACTER OF IMPERIALISM." SHCHERBAKOV CHARGED THAT UNITED STATES CONSTANTLY INCREASING MILITARY EXPENDITURES AND AMERICAN MONOPOLISTS INCREASING WAR-RELATED PROFITS. PRESENT COURSE OF PENTAGON IS AIMED AT PROVIDING NEW MILITARY CAPABILITIES, EG, TRIDENT SUBMARINES AND OTHER NEW TYPES OF WEAPONS. TRUE, U.S. SAYS IT HAS CHANGED TO CONCEPT OF SUFFICIENCY, BUT IS ALWAYS WORKING TO MAKE WEAPONS BETTER. NUMBERS MAY DECREASE, BUT QUALITY INCREASES. SOVIET UNION, FOR ITS PART, TIRELESSLY TRIES TO LIMIT ARMAMENTS, REDUCING GREAT BURDEN ON PEOPLES OF WORLD. SHCHERBAKOV NOTED THAT PEKING, UNFORTUNATELY, IS ALSO PART OF IMPERIALIST REACTIONARY PLANS. CHINA PRESSES TERRITORIAL CLAIMS ON OTHER COUNTRIES WHICH AMOUNT TO ONE-THIRD OF PRESENT AREA OF CHINESE TERRITORY AND PEKING ALLIES ITSELF WITH MOST REACTIONARY FIGURES, EG STRAUSS AND JACKSON. SHCHERBAKOV SAID THAT MOST OF CHINESE FORCES ARE DIRECTED AGAINST SOVIET UNION AND MONGOLIA AND THAT CHINA DEVOTING ENORMOUS EFFORTS TO DEVELOP NUCLEAR AND ROCKET CAPABILITIES. SHCHERBAKOV SAID CHINA NOW POSSESSES SOME 350 NUCLEAR DEVICES AND THREE TYPES OF ROCKETS WITH RESPECTIVE RANGES OF 2,000 4,000 AND 10,000 KILOMETERS. FINALLY, SHCHERBAKOV OBSERVED, JAPAN, SOUTH KOREA AND CHINA FIGURE PROMINENTLY IN U.S. DESIRE TO REMAIN IN ASIA.

4. VICE ADMIRAL PLOTNIKOV AND MAJOR GENERAL BIBIKOV FOLLOWED SHCHERBAKOV'S INTRODUCTION WITH GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF U.S. NAVAL CAPABILITIES. PLOTNIKOV DID MOST OF TALKING. THE ADMIRAL SAID U.S. HAS A VERY STRONG NAVY ABLE TO DETERMINE SITUATIONS IN WORLD

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OCEANS. OTHER WESTERN NAVIES, HE SAID, POSSESS NO SIGNIFICANT STRENGTH IN COMPARISON WITH U.S. AND, THUS, SOVIET UNION CONSIDERED THEM ONLY AS SUPPLEMENT (DOPOLNENIYE) TO U.S. NAVAL CAPABILITIES. PLOTNIKOV DESCRIBED EVOLUTION OF U.S. NAVY AS ONE OF UNDERGOING GREAT CHANGES SINCE WORLD WAR II, EG ACQUIRING BALLISTIC MISSILES AND STRATEGIC AVIATION. AFTER WORLD WAR II, U.S. HAD

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LENINGRAD 0234

PREDOMINANT FLEET IN WORLD SINCE ENGLAND COULD NO LONGER COMPETE AND GERMAN AND JAPANESE FLEETS WERE DESTROYED. THIS STRONG U.S. FLEET SERVED AIMS OF U.S. IMPERIALISM. BUT, SAID THE ADMIRAL, TIMES HAVE CHANGED. SOVIET NAVY EMERGED AND BUILT SHIPS WHICH COULD GO TO ANY CORNER OF EARTH. PLOTNIKOV SAID THAT TODAY NEITHER SOVIET UNION NOR OTHER POWERS CONSIDER THAT U.S. NAVY RULES THE OCEANS. AS A RESULT, SOME IN U.S. NOW ACCUSE SOVIET UNION OF WANTING TO CONTROL THE OCEANS AND USE THIS AS EXCUSE TO MAKE DEVELOPMENT OF U.S. NAVY THE CENTER OF ATTENTION. PLOTNIKOV SAID THAT U.S. NAVY BUDGET REFLECTS THIS EMPHASIS ON DEVELOPMENT SINCE U.S. NAVY NOW RECEIVING \$33 BILLION FOR 1975-76.

5. ADMIRAL PLOTNIKOV DESCRIBED CONVERSION TO POSEIDON MIRV MISSILES WHICH WOULD PERMIT U.S. SUBMARINES TO INCREASE NUMBER OF SUCH WARHEADS TO 4,000. HE SAID THAT INCREASED RANGE OF POSEIDON MISSILES-- 5,200 KILOMETERS-- WAS ACCOMPANIED IN IMPROVED ACCURACY FROM 1 KILOMETER PROBABLE IMPACT AREA TO LESS THAN ONE-HALF KILOMETER-- .43-- FROM DESIGNATED TARGET, WITH WARHEAD POWER OF 40 TO 50 KILOTONS EACH. THIS, PLOTNIKOV SAID, COULD ONLY BE REGARDED AS AN AUGMENTATION

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(NARASHCHIVANIYE) OF U.S. NAVAL CAPABILITIES.

6. ADMIRAL PLOTNIKOV SAID THAT THIS WAS BY NO MEANS ALL THAT WAS INVOLVED SINCE U.S. HAS BEGUN TRIDENT SUBMARINE SYSTEM. ALTHOUGH TRIDENT SYSTEM DID NOT REPRESENT VIOLATION OF SALT AGREEMENTS, IT WAS ALSO SIGNIFICANT AUGMENTATION, WITH FIRST TRIDENT DUE FOR COMPLETION IN 1978 AND LAST IN 1983. FURTHERMORE, RANGE OF TRIDENT-BORNE MISSILES WOULD BE INCREASED GREATLY TO 7,200 KILOMETERS. PLOTNIKOV RECAPPED U.S. NAVY'S SUBMARINE CAPABILITIES BY NOTING THAT GENERAL MIX OF TRIDENT BOATS AND POSEIDON MISSILES WOULD GIVE U.S. NAVY AVAILABLE NUCLEAR STRENGTH OF 7,360 WARHEADS, 4,000 WITH RANGES OF 7,200 KILOMETERS AND THE REMAINING 3,360 WARHEADS WITH A 5,200 KILOMETER RANGE, ALL OF WHICH WOULD REPRESENT 50 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL U.S. NUCLEAR STRENGTH.

7. MOVING ON TO A DESCRIPTION OF OTHER U.S. NAVY CAPABILITIES, PLOTNIKOV SAID U.S. NAVY CONTINUING EMPHASIS ON CARRIERS, INCLUDING TWO NUCLEAR CARRIERS, AND NEW TYPES OF TORPEDO-CARRYING SUBMARINES. CARRIERS, HE SAID, WERE BEING READAPTED FROM ATTACK TO MULTI-PURPOSE CHARACTER AND WOULD BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH HELICOPTERS AND STOL AIRCRAFT IN ANTI-SUBMARINE WARFARE. PLOTNIKOV ALSO ATTACHED SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE TO U.S. NAVY'S EMPHASIS ON NUCLEAR TORPEDO BOATS.

8. SUMMING UP, ADMIRAL PLOTNIKOV AND GENERAL BIBIKOV MADE IT PLAIN THAT EVEN IF U.S. NAVY NOT CONSIDERED STILL FIRST IN WORLD, IT WAS DEFINETLY STILL FIRST IN SOVIET THINKING. PLOTNIKOV OBSERVED THAT "TO OUR BITTER REGRET, U.S.NAVAL BASES ENCIRCLE THE ENTIRE TERRITORY OF THE SOVIET UNION AND HAVE GREATLY INCREASED THE NUMBER OF NAVAL PATROLS." HE ADDED THAT U.S. SECOND FLEET, ALTHOUGH BASED IN UNITED STATES, WAS DIRECTED SOLELY TOWARD EUROPE. MOREOVER, AMERICANS WERE STILL NOT SATISFIED AND NOW WANTED TO ACQUIRE NEW BASES IN INDIAN OCEAN. ENDING ON UPBEAT NOTE, PLOTNIKOV REITERATED THAT SOVIET NAVY HAS ALSO GROWN AND COULD NOW "THREATEN THE SHORES OF THE UNITED STATES." SPECIFICALLY, HE SAID, "85 PER CENT OF U.S. INDUSTRY AND MOST OF THE BIG AMERICAN

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AIRPORTS ARE LOCATED ON THE EAST COAST WHERE THEY ARE EXPOSED TO ATTACK (POD UDAROM) FROM THE SOVIET FLEET."

THUS, HE CONCLUDED, THE U.S. KNOWS THAT THE SOVIET FLEET
HAS VERY LONG RANGE VESSELS AND MUST TAKE THIS INTO
ACCOUNT IN ASSESSING REALM OF POSSIBILITIES.
NEUBERT

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